



News Release

HQ U.S. ARMY EUROPE & 7TH ARMY
Office of the Chief of Public Affairs
Unit 29351 APO AE 09014
Postfach 10 43 21 69033 Heidelberg
DSN 370-8934/6647 Tel.: 06221-57-8934/6647

June 5, 2007
Release No. 200706-002

Army chief of staff discusses his plans for “way ahead”

U.S. Army, Europe Public Affairs

HEIDELBERG, Germany -- Gen. George W. Casey Jr., Army chief of staff, called the U.S. Army in Europe’s mission “an important part of our overall Army effort” during a stop at Grafenwoehr June 1, part of a theater-wide visit to talk to troops about the “way ahead” for the Army.

During a three-day sweep of U.S. Army, Europe, Gen. Casey, accompanied by his wife, Sheila, visited Heidelberg, Baumholder, Kaiserslautern, Grafenwoehr, Hohenfels, Schweinfurt, Kosovo and Landstuhl Regional Medical Center.

During a press conference in Grafenwoehr, Gen. Casey outlined his seven initiatives, which he said are designed to sharpen the focus on transformation efforts:

- accelerate growth and readiness improvements in the Army
- increase support to Soldiers and Families
- maintain continuity and momentum in modernization
- enhance the reserve components’ operational capabilities
- refine the Army’s institutional policies and programs to better serve an expeditionary Army at war
- improve the Army’s strategic communications

He added, “I was the vice chief of staff of the Army when we began this transformation effort, and so I bought into the basic correctness of the direction of that effort four years ago. So you’re not going to see any sharp right- or left-hand turns in the direction the U.S. Army is headed in its transformation.”

Gen. Casey, who in February completed 32 months as Multi-National Force-Iraq commander, said Army transformation is closely tied to operations and preparing Soldiers for conflict, as the war on terrorism nears the end of its sixth year.

“I can tell you that the Soldiers that I’ve seen across the Army, a lot of them preparing to go back to Iraq or Afghanistan, understand what’s at stake here for the United States and for our allies,” he said. “I must say, I saw it on the ground in Iraq every day: the young

men and women of the coalition, they get it. They understand what they're doing for their countries."

His advice to Soldiers preparing to deploy, he said, is to pay attention to their training.

"At the small unit level, success in Iraq and Afghanistan, much like success in any conflict, is grounded on effective standards and discipline in the small units," he said. "We are getting better and better in ... replicating the environments that these Soldiers are going into, and if they take full advantage of the training that they'll get here (in Grafenwoehr and Hohenfels), I think they'll be quite successful."

The chief of staff also addressed the recent increase in deployment tour length. He said there were three primary reasons for instituting 15-month deployments: first, to give the commanders more flexibility; second, to give Soldiers and families predictability; and finally, to ensure deploying brigades had sufficient training time at home station.

Sheila Casey, in a separate set of interviews, said spouses across the Army have told her frequency and duration of deployments is a top concern.

She said her central message to the Soldiers, spouses and family members of U.S. Army, Europe, is, "Hang in there. This is tough, I know it's tough. I know these extended deployments are hard. Thank you for everything you're doing each and every day."

-30-



Sgt. 1st Class Jeffery Folks, an Operations NCO assigned to 1st Battalion, 35th Armor, part of the 1st Armored Division's, 2nd Brigade, was one of the Soldiers who had the chance to meet with Gen. Casey during the Chief of Staff's visit to Baumholder, Germany.

(Photo by Rick Bumgardner, U.S. Army, Europe Public Affairs)



Sheila Casey, wife of U.S. Army Chief of Staff Gen. George W. Casey, Jr., listens to comments from V Corps family readiness leaders at Campbell Barracks in Heidelberg, Germany May 31. Ms. Casey met with the group during part of the first day's itinerary of a three-day visit to units across U.S. Army Europe. (Photo by Spc. Sean Finch, V Corps Public Affairs)